



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# WELCOME HOME 842ND

A welcome home ceremony for Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 842nd Engineer Company was held today at the Donald E. Young Center at Black Hills State University in Spearfish. The 160 soldiers completed a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Governor Dennis Daugaard, Rep. Kristi Noem, Spearfish Mayor Jerry Krambeck, Sturgis Mayor Mark Carstensen, Belle Fourche Mayor Gary Hendrickson and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG, were featured speakers at the ceremony.

Members of the 842nd arrived in the United States on Sept. 17 and have been completing de-mobilization requirements at Fort Bliss, Texas before returning to South Dakota.

The Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis-based unit deployed in September 2011 with a mission to provide horizontal construction and engineering support. Equipped with bulldozers, scrapers, cranes, loaders and 20-ton dump trucks, the unit built and maintained roads, constructed base force protection measures and provided limited clearing operations.

Parades for the 842nd were held in Belle Fourche, Whitewood, Sturgis and Spearfish.

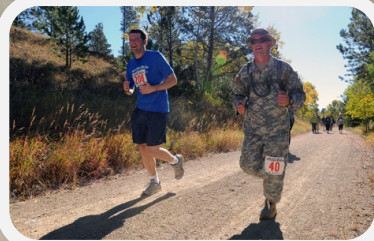


**WELCOME HOME 842ND  
YOU MAKE AMERICA PROUD**

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## 9TH ANNUAL VETERANS HONOR MARCH HELD IN BLACK HILLS



### VETERANS MARCH

"It's not 26.2 miles.....it's 10 water stops" (author unknown)

The South Dakota National Guard's Enlisted Association hosted its 9th annual Black Hills Veteran's Honor March on Saturday, Sept. 22, in the Northern Black Hills.

More than 250 participants took part in this year's 26.2 mile march or 16.2 mini-march, which pays tribute to the many sacrifices made by this nation's veterans.



## VETERANS ENJOY AN OLD FASHIONED CHUCK WAGON



Last week, the residents of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home participated in an old fashioned "Chuckwagon" at the Hero's Park gazebo.

The chef started out the morning with a pot of cowboy coffee on the fire; then proceeded to cook lunch which consisted of cowboy stew, corn bread, and cobbler.

While the meal was cooking entertainment was provided by the Rambling Rangers. Yee Ha!!!!

Residents also had the opportunity to befriend some of the animals brought in for the day.

All in all, the day was enjoyed by the cooks, the residents and the staff.



Gold Star Mother's Day, to be observed on Sunday, September 30 this year, is a day for people to recognize and honor those who have lost a son or daughter while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Shortly after World War I the Gold Star Mothers Club was formed in the United States to provide support for mothers that lost sons or daughters in the war. The name came from the custom of families of servicemen hanging a banner called a Service Flag in the window of their homes. The Service Flag had a star for each family member in the military. Living servicemen were represented by a blue star, and those who had lost their lives were represented by a gold star.



University of South Dakota researchers are participating in a multidisciplinary study to provide new insights into the complex issues regarding effects of traumatic stress.

The research project is funded by a \$1.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health. It will examine the association between traumatic stress and health outcomes among veterans who have been fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Psychology professors Jeffrey Simons and RalUCA Gaher will examine several social, psychological, environmental and genetic factors that contribute to individual differences in resilience and vulnerability. The project uses several advanced methods of data collection, including near real-time monitoring of behavior with palmtop computers.

The research is being conducted with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Sioux Falls and the Veteran Health Care System in Bay Pines, Fla.





## RESOURCES LAUNCHED ON VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH

A new tool is available to the entertainment industry with the release of *Picture This: Veteran Mental Health Challenges and Solutions*, a comprehensive guide to assist members of the creative arts community in accurately portraying mental health issues veterans may experience.

"I encourage those in the entertainment industry who seek to tell stories about veterans to focus on the topic of veteran mental health in ways that transcend stereotypes and present a more honest, compelling, and powerful product," said U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. "The true stories of the veterans I know and have served with are more engaging than a simple caricature of a veteran with a mental health problem."

The Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC), in collaboration with and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, developed this guide with input from mental health experts, veterans, advocates, policymakers, the entertainment industry, and many others who are committed to honoring the service of veterans and helping them overcome challenges.

*Picture This* was written to help writers, actors, producers, and others create authentic depictions of veterans facing and overcoming mental health challenges. The publication was developed as a result of forums in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., that brought together mental health experts, members of the entertainment community, and veterans to share powerful testimonials of their own challenges and triumphs.

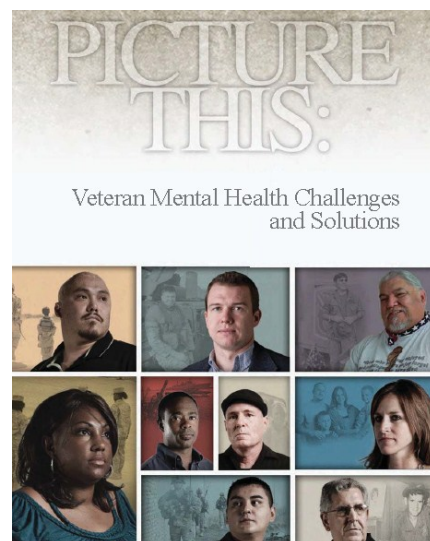
Discussions about the issues some veterans face and factors that influence whether or not they seek help influenced the publication's content. *Picture This* supports the creative process and is organized to address the needs of those developing entertaining story lines and characters that greatly impact societal perceptions.

Citing firsthand accounts from Veterans and their families referenced in *Picture This* and featured in the VA's *Make the Connection* public outreach campaign, VA's Deputy Chief Consultant for Specialty Mental Health, Dr. Sonja Batten, states, "You can serve your audience, and in particular, our Nation's Veterans, by allowing the real stories they share on *Make the Connection* to inform and inspire your work."

*Picture This* includes background data on America's Veterans and explains terminology on symptoms, conditions, and treatment options. Detailed information on mental health topics is accompanied by candid and unscripted accounts of veterans and their family members who faced difficult life events and experiences, reached out for support, and found resources for getting their lives back on track.

On Aug. 31, President Obama issued his historic Executive Order to improve mental health services for veterans, servicemembers and military families. As directed in the Executive Order, the VA is hiring 1,600 new mental health professionals and 300 support staff. Last year, the VA provided quality, specialty mental health services to 1.3 million veterans. Since 2009, the VA has increased the mental health care budget by 39 percent. Since 2007, the VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

To see the joint VA / Entertainment Industries Council publication, please visit: <http://www.eiconline.org/eic-resources/publications/national/picture-this/VA-MH>.



## LANCERS, FALCONS SHARE SD SKIES



The skies above Ellsworth Air Force Base are routinely filled with B-1 bombers, but during Sept. 17 to 21, base bombers shared the airspace and ramp area with several South Dakota Air National Guard F-16s during a Guard training exercise.

The 114th Fighter Wing Fighting Lobos headquartered in Sioux Falls came to Ellsworth for their 2012 Live Drop exercise.

"We're not allowed to use live ammunition for training purposes around Sioux Falls because we share airspace with a civilian airport," said Master Sgt. Shawn Greer, 114th Logistics Readiness Squadron first sergeant. "Ellsworth was instrumental in allowing us to utilize their resources for our fighters to complete their annual requirements."

Prior to touching down at Ellsworth with more than 90 Airmen and six F-16 Fighting Falcons, Capt. Steve Schultz, 175th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, said he visited Ellsworth in July to complete a site survey and ensure the base was capable of accommodating the group during the exercise.

"Luckily for us, the 37th Bomb Squadron is deployed to Southwest Asia," said Schultz, who previously participated in the Air National Guard's 2007 Live Drop exercise at Ellsworth. "We were able to land on Monday and immediately set up our operations for the week."

Schultz said he flew with four other F-16s to the Utah Test and Training Range Sept. 18, and successfully conducted long-range strike missions. He noted that at the completion of the exercise, aircrews were able to validate F-16 tactics, techniques and procedures used during long-range strike missions.

"It was great training for our new pilots," Schultz said. "We met our goal in hitting times over targets as precisely as possible. Things get a lot more serious when you fly with live ammunition, but because we practiced how we play, we were able to persevere."

With the culmination of the exercise, South Dakota Airmen from both sides of the state united to accomplish a true feat of total force.

Greer added that he appreciates how Ellsworth Airmen stepped up to ensure F-16 aircrews and support personnel had everything they needed to accomplish their mission.

"We came together as an Air Force team, not individual units or squadrons," Greer said. "I'm thankful for all the professionalism Ellsworth Airmen demonstrated."

## STAND DOWNS DEEMED SUCCESSFUL

This month, Stand Downs were held in Watertown, Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, Pierre, Wagner and Sturgis. These one-day outreach events bring together human service providers to one central location, increasing access to services for many individuals. Attendees receive a wealth of information, tools and resources to tackle the issues they face each day. Individuals can obtain food, clothing, identification documents and vital records, wellness checks, haircuts, veterans benefits, and employment services, among many other things.

"As always, our goal at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, is to ensure that veterans are aware of the benefits they have earned," said Deputy Secretary Steve Harding. "Stand Downs afford us the opportunity to educate veterans on the benefits they qualify for, file claims, and/or verify the status of claims." Harding said, "It's about the dignity of the veteran and just providing the information they need and assist them in obtaining their benefits."

Department staffers Aaron Pollard, Jon Gohn, Steve Oliva, Kevin Bowen and Kevin Swanson represented the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs at the various Stand Downs.

Also assisting veterans at the Stand Downs were County Veterans Service Officers: Roy Farabee (Gregory and Charles Mix Counties); Fred Kuil and Lowell McFarland (Douglas County); Richard Berringer (Bon Homme County); Al Janzen (Codington County); Tom Gohn (Brown County); Gordon Richard (Spink County); Ron Hoffer (Edmunds County); and Red Vetter (Faulk County).



## SFVAHCS OFFERS FLU SHOTS

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System announces that eligible, enrolled veterans have an opportunity to update their vaccinations as part of the VA's preventive medicine program. Flu shots, Zostavax (shingles), pneumovax, and Tdap for tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough are now available.

Enrolled veterans are also being offered immunizations during their regularly scheduled clinic appointments at the medical center and VA outpatient clinics. Walk-in clinics will also be provided for enrolled veterans at the Sioux Falls VA on:

October 15, 2012, 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

October 11, 2012, 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

October 31, 2012, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Veterans will be screened before receiving the immunizations, and not everyone will be able to get all four immunizations

Walk-in clinics are also being scheduled for veterans seen at the VA outpatient clinics.



# Upcoming Events

Sept. 30—Gold Star Mothers Day

Oct. 1—Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—Black Hills National Cemetery—9:00 am

Oct. 19—SFVAHCS Women Veterans Conference—Sioux Falls Holiday Inn City Centre (100 W. 8th Street) - 8:00 am—2:45 pm

Oct. 19—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—Wagner CBOC—12:30 pm—4:30 pm

Oct. 22—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—Watertown CBOC—8:30 am—4:00 pm

Oct. 23—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—Watertown CBOC—8:30 am—4:00 pm

Oct. 23—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV—Sioux Falls—10:30 am

Oct. 26—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—Wagner CBOC—12:30 pm—4:30 pm

Oct 23—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV—Sioux Falls—10:30 am

Nov. 1—SFVAHCS Flu Shot Clinic—Watertown CBOC—8:30 am—4:30 pm

Nov. 11—Veterans Day

Nov. 12—Veterans Day Regional Site Program—Riggs High School Theatre—Pierre—10:45 am

Dec. 8—Wreaths Across America

Check out the Department on Facebook —

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Dakota-Department-of-Military-and-Veterans-Affairs/156424074389725>

South Dakota National Guard Museum is now on Facebook —

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.115957121889013.23203.115956388555753&type=3#!/southdakotationalguardmuseum>



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